CHAPTER VII.

The primitive Hunter, Cow-Driver and Indian Trader of Upper Carolina—Patrick and William Calhoun—The Business of Stock-raising—Cow-pens—The thorough-bred Horses of Colonial times—The Statute of 1700 relating to Horses—The Wild Horses of Carolina—Old Jesse Gladden, &c.

We have now presented most that is important in the natural history of Upper-Carolina. A country thus abounding in magnificent woods and prairies, and so rich in its production of animal life, must have offered, as similar regions of the west at the present day, rare attractions to the hunter and stock-raiser; and if all other information on the subject had been wholly lost, it would not be difficult to conjecture what sort of men first ventured to penetrate its unexplored wilds.

There were three remarkable classes of men who preceded,by several years, the regular settlers of north-western Carolina; these were the hunters, cow-drivers and Indian traders. The hunter, though no pioneer—for he appropriated no lands, leveled no forest, and cultivated but little soil—yet served by his adventurous life many valuable purposes; he conciliated the jealous savages, impressed them, as Indians were easily impressed, by his romantic courage and unrivaled skill in the use of the rifle, with sentiments of respect for the character and prowess of white men; and in his wanderings over vast tracts of wild territory, having a keen eye, as well for the virtues of the soil and beauties of the country, as

for the immediate objects of his pursuit, brought back to the border settlements glowing accounts of Elysian spots he had seen in the wilderness, and thus opened the way to the most eligible sections for succeeding groups of advancing settlers.

Patrick and William Calhoun, the pioneers of western Abbeville, were induced to visit the Long-Canes, by such descriptions of the fertility and loveliness of the country there, which they had obtained from a band of hunters at the Waxhaws.

No man now living east of the great western plains, may claim to be the modern representative of the ancient hunter of Upper-Carolina. He was the peculiar product of his age, and passed away forever with the deer and buffalo, as they disappeared before the aggressive axe of the pioneers. He was the Kitt Carson of primitive times; and, like Kitt Carson, was an extraordinary man. Poor, but scorning the arts and trammels of civilized society, with no companion but his dog, he passed his solitary life in the depths of the forest, undisturbed by the world's busy industry, and far out of reach of the dishonest strategy of its respectable thrift. And when the line of advancing settlements approached his haunt, and the sound of the settlers' axe began to mingle with the sharp echoes of his rifle, seizing the simple moveables of his log shanty, he removed a corresponding distance into the yet unappropriated wilderness.

A life like this, indolent and aimless as it may seem, illured no ordinary men. His powers were just of that kind, which in all ages, have elicited the warmest admiration of mankind. Nothing daunted him;

and to lion-like courage, strength and endurance, he added the activity of the catamount and the vigilance of the hawk—his eye was never at rest. Even when he was on a temporary visit to the settlements, or in Charleston procuring a fresh supply of ammunition its ceaseless activity—scrutinizing every nook, and sweeping every view—betrayed his habits and wild haunts.

Not far from the log-hut of the hunter stood that of the *cow-driver*, a character likewise worthy of note, but inferior to the hunter, in the attributes of a chivalrous manhood, in just the proportion of his greater sordidness.

Besides his association with the Indians, and their gloomy wilds, there was little romance about him; yet his life was one of self-reliance, hardship, and active vigilance; and in it were trained, for eminent usefulness, many of the backwoods soldiers of the Revolution. General Andrew Williamson, of White Hall, had been a cow-driver in his youth on the cane pastures of the Hard-Labor.

The business of stock-raising, at this period, on the frontiers, was scarcely less profitable than it is at present in similar regions of the west; and numbers of enterprising men engaged in it, either personally or through their agents. Having selected a tract, where cane and pea-vine grass grew most luxuriantly, they erected in the midst of it temporary cabins, and spacious pens. These were used as enclosures, in which to collect the cattle at proper seasons, for the purpose of counting and branding them; and from many such places in the upper-country, vast numbers of

beeves were annually driven to the distant markets of Charleston, Philadelphia, and even to New York.

In 1740, Nightingale, the maternal grandfather of the late Judge William Johnston, established a *ranch* or *cow-pen*, six miles from the present site of Winnsboro', at a spot afterwards owned on Little Cedar Creek by the lamented General Strother. A man by the name of Howell, from the Congaree, soon after, formed a similar establishment, at a place near Winn's Bridge, on Little River. Several years after the Revolution, General Andrew Pickens was engaged in the business of stock-raising near his new residence in old Pendleton, and drove beeves to the market in New York.

At an earlier day, a *cow-pen* was quite an important institution. It was usually officered with a superintendent, and a corps of sub-agents—all active men, experienced woodsmen, and unfailing shots at long or short sight with the rifle. For these a hamlet of cabins were erected, besides the large enclosures for the stock; all of which, with a considerable plat of cleared land in the vicinity for the cultivation of corn, made quite an opening in the woods; and when all were at home, and the cattle in the pens, a very noisy, civilized scene, in the midst of the savage wilderness.

These rude establishments became afterwards, wherever they were formed, the great centres of settlements founded by the cultivators of the soil, who followed just behind the cow-drivers in their enterprising search for unappropriated, productive lands. They never failed to afford them abundant provisions,

some society, and a sure protection from the Indians and not less terrible white marauders, who now began to infest the border.*

The professional cow-drivers, however, did not monopolize the business; few of the old settlers neglected the raising of stock in a country so admirably adapted to it, and generally came well provided for the purpose. They brought with them, from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina, many animals of superior blood, and from this race sprang the famous chargers of the Revolutionary partizans, so often celebrated in the thrilling stories of that period. At no day since have there been so many thorough-bred riding-horses in Upper-Carolina—horses whose mettle and prowess admirably adapted them to the heroic service of the spirited men who bestrode them. May it not be fairly regarded as by no means one of the least significant signs of the present degeneracy, that the splendid, thorough-bred saddle-horses of the olden time have long ago ceased from the land, and men and women are both alike content to loll lazily in cushioned buggies and sumptuous carriages?

The generous emulation of that day, was, who could appear on the finest and most spirited horse: now the base struggle is, who can drive out with the largest amount of glitter and glare upon his carriage and harness. If giants were not in those days, men there were, at least, who, like Alexander with Bucephalus, prided themselves in being able to mount and

* Pearson's MS. History of Fairfield.

subdue steeds, whose mettle was worthy of kings and warriors.

Yet it would appear from an old statute, enacted in 1700, but repealed seven years after, that not all the horses brought at that early period into the province from Virginia, and other eastern colonies, were of the most desirable either for their blood or breeding. Its preamble runs as follows: "Whereas great numbers of horses have of late been brought from Virginia and other northern plantations into this Colony, and daily more may be expected, which hath, and will prove disadvantageous and detrimental to the inhabitants hereof; for the prevention of which, and for the better encouragement of more serviceable horses to be bred amongst us, be it enacted," &c.*

This statute, no doubt, acted as efficiently in Virginia and Pennsylvania as in Carolina "for the encouragement of more serviceable horses to be bred," and greatly contributed to that improvement of their breeds, by importations from Europe, which a half century after, enabled the Scotch-Irish emigrants from these colonies to bring with them into Upper-Carolina a superior race of that noble animal. Many fine horses were also brought directly from abroad into Carolina, that likewise proved an important source of spirit and energy to the stock of the revolutionary period in every part of the province.

While on the subject of the horse, it will not be

* Statutes of South Carolina.

uninteresting to many to say something of the wild breed of Carolina and Southern America. Pearson, in his unpublished History of Fairfield, labors through several pages, and with considerable plausibility, to prove that the horse was a native of the Continent, and well known to the Indians long before the first visits of the Europeans. Some of his statements are at least novel.

At the period, he affirms, of the settlement of Carolina by Sayle and his followers, in 1670, immense droves of wild horses were found subsisting upon the natural pastures of the country. The colonists soon learned to take them in snares, and great numbers of them, it is related by old settlers, were caught in this way. Old Jessy Gladden, long since dead, pointing on one occasion to a valley on his estate near the Wateree Creek, observed: "In my boyhood I often saw large herds of wild horses rushing along that valley in a wild stampede; and so great were their numbers that the ground on which our cabin stood shook under their tread."

The opinion that this noble quadruped is not a native of America, seems to have originated chiefly from a few casual remarks, found in the chronicles of the first discoverers and explorers. It is a striking incident related, and often repeated, of the cavaliers of Cortez, in his invasion of Mexico, that they were taken by the simple natives, when first seen approaching on horseback, to be so many monsters composed partly of the body of the horse, and partly of that of a man. From this it was hastily con-

cluded that they had never before seen the horse, while there is clearly an equal probability that their astonishment did not arise from the sight of the horses, but the novel complexion, strange costume, and extraordinary pageantry of the stern cavaliers who rode upon them ; and so great was the impression made upon their imaginations, that it was easy for them to fancy a natural connection between the Spaniards and their steeds.

But neither the pageantry nor the wonderful race of men thus presented to the view of the Mexicans, was requisite to produce such an effect upon their unsophisticated minds. It is well known that the buffalo was originally found roaming over the whole extent of the Southern Atlantic and Gulf States ; but no Indian or Mexican had ever used them for purposes of draught or burden.* Suppose, therefore, that instead of horses, the Spaniards had approached the City of Mexico mounted upon the backs of domesticated buffaloes, would the astonishment of the natives have been less or their imaginations less active?

An incident is related in the primitive history of Carolina, which precisely illustrates the point in view. When the Catawba Indians first heard of the arrival of Sayle on the coast, they instantly—so the tradition runs—dispatched a war party to reconnoitre the movements and appearance of the strangers.

* The Mexicans never used brute animals for draught or burden. A hundred men of burden bore a present from Montezuma to Cortez. —American History, vol. 11, p. 35.

Proceeding to the banks of the Ashley, the party concealed themselves in a glade in full view of the sea, and there, for the first time, beheld the ships of the white men, as they rode at anchor. "*What great birds!*" they exclaimed to one another, and very soon they saw the English themselves hurrying to and fro, with strange notions and yet stranger dress, both in the vessels and on land. But an object now appeared that astonished them almost as much as the ships—a man leading out a horse with a bell on his neck, which he proceeded to tether to grass on the glade not far from their hiding place.

On their return to the Nation, this circumstance of the horse was related as a subject of peculiar interest, yet the country, at that period, abounded in wild horses; they must have seen hundreds of them on the path, as they passed to and from the coast; but a horse with a bell on, and tethered to grass, was a sight sufficient to excite the wonder of any savage on the Continent.

In this plausible manner, the amiable chronicler of Fairfield ventures to lay claim to the American nativity of the horse. The argument, however, is more ingenious than historically truthful. It cannot be denied that the Spaniards introduced into the country the original stock, from which the wild breed of the prairie, both of that period and of the present, are descended.* After much observation

* For the privilege of using the interesting historical papers left by Mr. Pearson, of Fairfield, we are indebted to the kindness of Major W. S. Lyles, of that district.

among the Southern Indians, Bartram informs us that the horse was not originally found in their possession. Of the wild horses of the Seminoles, which he met with in East Florida, he thus writes:—"They are the most beautiful and sprightly species of that noble creature, perhaps, anywhere to be seen, but are of a small breed, and as delicately formed as the American roe-buck. The horse in the Creek tongue, is *echoclucco*, the great deer. The Seminole horses are said to have descended from the Andalusian breed, brought here by the Spaniards, when they first established the colony of East Florida. From the forehead to their nose is a little arched or aquiline, and so are the fine Choctaw horses among the upper Creeks, which are said to have been brought thither from New Mexico across the Mississippi, by those nations of Indians who emigrated from the West, beyond the river. These horses are everywhere like the Seminole breed, only larger, and perhaps not so lively and capricious. It is a matter of conjecture, whether or not the different soil and situation of the country may have contributed, in some measure, in forming the difference in size and other qualities between them. I have observed the horses, and other animals in the high, hilly country of Carolina, are of a much larger and stronger make than those which are bred in the flat country next the sea-coast. A buck-skin of the Cherokees, will weigh twice as much as those bred in the low, flat country of Carolina."

Lawson, though he gives us quite a curious and

minute journal of an excursion which he made early in the beginning of the eighteenth century, from Charleston, through portions of the middle and upper-country, appears to have seen no wild horses, unless he includes them in the general term cattle. He speaks of "passing several large savannahs, wherein are curious ranges for cattle."* In a description which follows, however, of a grand town-dance that he witnessed among the Waxhaws, in the present territory of Lancaster, he speaks of the women leading off in the joyous circle, having hawks' bells about their necks, and great bells for *horses* fastened to their legs.

On the luxuriant cane pastures of the Tugaloo and Keowee Rivers, and, doubtless, at quite an early period, on the richer savannahs of the Long-Cane and Saluda, as well as beyond the mountains, the Cherokees kept immense droves of horses that roamed as wild and free as the deer of the same region. These horses are said to have been of very superior quality; the Cherokees were famous jockeys, and exceedingly shrewd in their judgment of those animals.

In the famine, however, that followed in the Nation, the ruinous onslaught, made in 1761, upon their towns by Col. Grant, of rattle snake memory, the discomfited Cherokees were reduced to the hard necessity of shooting and eating most of their horses. At the conclusion of the war, however, they soon

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* Lawson's Carolina, p. 214.

replenished their herds from the English settlements with a breed as excellent as that they had lost.*

The white traders who settled among the Cherokees, encouraged by the many natural advantages offered by a country abounding in grasses, turned their attention to the raising of horses; and some of them laid claim to stocks of a hundred and fifty head, running at large upon the common pastures. They are described as being of good size, well made, hard-hoofed, handsome, strong, and fit for the saddle or draft. The old chronicler adds, however, "a person runs too great a risk to buy any to take them out of the country, because every spring season most of them make for their native range."

The Andalusian or Spanish horse, from which sprung the wild horse of America, was itself derived from the Barbary stock, the nearest approach, perhaps, in existence, to the pure Arabian blood, descended direct from Mohammed's celebrated mare, whose spotless genealogy is carefully preserved among the archives of Mecca. The horse of Andalusia is still much prized; it is small, but beautifully formed. Its head is, however, rather large in proportion to the body, the mane thick, the ears long, the eyes animated, the breast full, the legs finely shaped, the pastern large, and the hoof high."† This is closely descriptive of the perfect horse, as drawn by an old writer, Camerarius; "he should have the breast broad, the hips round and the mane long, the coun-

* Adair. † Encyclo. Amer.

tenance fierce like a lion, a nose like a sheep, the legs, head and skin of a deer, the throat and neck of a wolf, and the ear and tail of a fox."

The excellence and beauty of many of the wild horses found at the present day on the plains of the far West, is a striking proof of the indestructible vigor and purity of original noble blood.

Lieut. R. S. Williamson, in the field notes of his explorations on the great Pacific slope, makes the following observation of the Klamath Lake Indians: "They own many horses, some of which were valuable animals. No offer would tempt them to sell any of the latter, although they were eager to dispose of a few miserable hacks, too worthless to purchase. The idea which prevails in Oregon, that all Indian horses are of inferior breed, doubtless arises from the fact that such only are brought to the settlements for sale. Near Klamath marsh, we saw a few animals of a pie-bald color, whose graceful forms and clear, piercing eyes, showed very superior blood. It may be that their genealogy extends back to the Barbary steeds, introduced by the Spaniards into Mexico, and supposed to be the progenitors of the wild horses of the prairies."*

It is a question not unworthy of consideration, how it came to pass, that a people who must undoubtedly have sprung from some stock of eastern origin, were yet found to be destitute of the horse, and to-

* Explorations and Surveys from the Mississippi to the Pacific, made and published under the direction of the U. S. Secretary of War, Vol. VI. p. 70.

tally ignorant, even, of the use of any beasts of burden. The horse has been the useful friend, almost the companion, of men in the Old World, from a period up to which no history runneth. It is not known, certainly, where he originated. He is mentioned in the Pentateuch, and is the subject of description in one of the most magnificent passages of Job. Why, then, did he not accompany the ancient and first pilgrims to the New World? It may be urged for the Indians, in relation to animals of burden, that, finding themselves in the midst of a country abounding in game, and a genial soil, they quickly fell into a manner of life whose simplicity required no assistance from such animals. A curious fact of a philological character, mentioned incidentally by Adair, would appear to give force to the supposition. In the dialect of one of the southern tribes the name of a horse-rope, *hissoobistarakshe*, "is derived from *tarakshe*, 'to tie,' and *hissooba*, an elk or horse that carries a burden; which suggests that they formerly saw elks carry burdens, though not, perhaps, in the northern provinces."

The primitive Mexicans were, however, quite advanced in civilization, which they must have derived either from their progenitors, or from some partially enlightened colony; for no savage people can elevate themselves. They practiced gardening and agriculture, built great public edifices, lived in cities of no mean splendor, and, in practical astronomy, surpassed even the enlightenment of the best days of Greece; yet they knew nothing of the horse

or the ox, and, though surrounded by multitudes of buffaloes, they had never learned the simple art of turning their strength and docility to the useful purposes of draught.

To our mind, a stronger presumptive argument for the western, local origin of the aborigines, may be derived from this singular historical fact, than all the chronological and ethnological deductions of the sciolists. We shall make of it, however, a better use. Is it not curiously, at least, suggestive of the manner in which the primitive race came from the Old World to America? If they found a pathway by land, crossing from Northern Asia, where the Aleutian Islands and the peninsula of Alaska yet in great part lie, or from the southern portion of the same continent, by Malacca, which, it is equally probable was, at some time in the history of the world, connected by an unbroken isthmus, along the fifteenth degree of south latitude, with the western shore of South America, would they not, unquestionably have brought the horse with them? He would have been exceedingly useful to them in so long a journey.

But two suppositions, therefore, remain, in regard to the means by which they effected their great migratory passage to the West. They were either a small party—a single pair it may have been—blown away in a frail bark of primitive times, from the eastern shore of Asia and cast upon the western coast of America, as it happened to a company of unfortunate Japanese, in 1836, near the coast of

California, or, they voluntarily achieved the passage of Bhering's Strait, in large numbers, and under such circumstances as precluded the transportation of the horse and every other animal of burden.

This is not presented as a demonstrative argument on the subject; it is, however, not a whit less conclusive than the bulk of the speculations on the same difficult problem by men of philosophy and genius.

Zimmerman believed they effected their migration by the way of South-eastern Asia; Mr. Jefferson argued that the aborigines knew no relationship to the races of the Old World, having originated on the soil; while another, of less celebrity, urged the claims of North-eastern Asia.

Dr. Livingston makes the same curious remark of the tribes visited by him in Africa—that neither the ox nor the horse were originally known to the aborigines of that continent. The horse and ox are, however, not the only animals of burden for which the New World is indebted to the European colonists.

It is generally believed that the present effort of the United States Government to introduce the camel into the South, and to naturalize it upon the great prairies, is the first attempt of the kind that was ever made. There is decided and venerable testimony to the contrary. Shortly after the Spaniards had supplied America with horses, that active people, then the most enterprising in Europe, imported from Africa a number of camels to be used for purposes of transportation on the plains of Mexico; and some

of them were doubtless used on the very prairies to which the more recent enterprise has consigned a second importation of the same noble animal. The old chronicler to whom we are indebted for this information,* remarks that the strange climate seemed to suit them well, and they promised to thrive and answer all the purposes for which they had been introduced. The experiment must, however, in some way have proved a total failure; the camels became extinct early enough to escape the notice of living generations, and we know of no other writer who has recorded the fact that such an attempt was ever made by any other than our own government.

There was a sandy plain on the bank of the Ennoree, quite famous in old times, at which the settlers on that stream, and from Duncan's Creek, were accustomed to assemble for the purpose of breaking their young horses to the saddle. John Duncan, the first settler of Laurens, drove with him from Pennsylvania to that region of country a fine stud of horses. It was not then necessary, however, to strip the corn of its blades and ship hay from the meadows of the North in order to sustain them; they kept rolling fat throughout the year on the natural grasses that abounded in the woods and valleys.†

The small or maiden cane was especially valuable

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*Cox's Carolina: published for Olive Payne, in Pope's Head Alley, Corn Hill. 1741 South Carolina College Library.

†Conversation of Joseph Duncan, grandson of the pioneer, and now in his 86th year.

for this purpose—it was exceedingly rich in nutritive qualities. "When slender it never grows higher than from four to seven feet; it shoots up in one summer, but produces no seeds until the following year. It is an evergreen, and is perhaps the most nourishing food for cattle upon earth. No other milk or butter has such flavor and richness as that which is produced from cows which feed upon cane. Horses that feed upon it work nearly as well as if they were fed upon corn, provided care be taken to give them, once in three or four days, a handful of salt.*

During the Revolution, this with the other grasses of the soil, was the chief food of the cavalry of both Whig and Tory in the campaigns of the upper-country.

In the deed of conveyance by which certain territory was ceded to the Province of Carolina, preparatory to the building of old Fort Prince George, the grass pastures lying between the Keowee and the Long-Canes, are, among other lands, particularly mentioned.†

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* Narrative of Capt. Imlay in his descriptions of Kentucky previous to 1793.

† State Records.